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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8908  
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3673  
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA  
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS HONG KONG 002051

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/CM, OES/IHB, MED, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP  
HHS PASS TO OGHA, NIH/FIC  
CDC ATLANTA PASS TO BLOUT, KELLY, COX  
BEIJING FOR CDC, HHS HEALTH ATTACHE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: AMED CASC CH HK KFLU PREL SOCI TBIO  
SUBJECT: HONG KONG SECURES H1N1 VACCINE, BUT CONCERNS OVER  
CAPACITY TO INOCULATE

**¶1.** (U) SUMMARY: Hong Kong health officials announced on November 5 that French manufacturer Sanofi Pasteur S.A. won the tender to provide Hong Kong with three million doses of H1N1 vaccine. The first 500,000 doses are scheduled to arrive in mid-December and the remaining 2.5 million doses in January 2010. Health officials expressed concern about the capacity of Hong Kong's health care staff to inoculate over two million people within a two-month period. END SUMMARY

**¶2.** (U) Hong Kong health officials announced the conclusion of its H1N1 vaccine tender on November 5. French manufacturer Sanofi Pasteur S.A. agreed to provide three million doses of H1N1 vaccine at HK\$79 (approximately US\$10.26) per dose, for a total price of HK\$237 million or US\$30.8 million.

**¶3.** (SBU) According to Dr. P.Y.Lam, Director of Health and Dr. Thomas Tsang, Controller for the Center of Health Protection (CHP), one of Hong Kong's main concerns during its vaccine tender was timing of delivery. With the H1N1 vaccine shortage in the U.S. and other parts of the world, health officials felt confident that Sanofi would be able to deliver the doses that Hong Kong required within the desired timeframe.

**¶4.** (U) Hong Kong officials expect to receive the first 500,000 doses in mid-December and the remaining 2.5 million doses in January 2010. By the end of December, Hong Kong plans to provide free vaccinations to five target high-risk groups: health care workers, patients with chronic illness and pregnant women, children between six months to six years old; residents aged 65 and above, and pig farmers and slaughterhouse workers. Children aged nine and under would receive two doses, while everyone else one dose.

**¶5.** (SBU) Health officials stated that they planned to use public clinics and hospitals for the inoculation program. Health officials were also negotiating with private doctors to help administer the free shots, but expressed concern about the capacity of health care staff to inoculate over two million people within a two-month period. They recalled a previous mass inoculation effort in 1997 for measles and said that the current effort would be "a nightmare." Additional temporary staff would be added, they said. Individuals not part of one of the target groups would be able to receive vaccinations from private physicians for a fee. Hong Kong plans to provide the vaccine to private physicians at cost plus administrative fees.

**¶6.** (U) Health officials stated that Hong Kong was going to administer the vaccine in time for the anticipated second wave of H1N1 in February to March 2010. Despite the public's concern about the timing of the vaccinations, health

officials believed that by vaccinating high-risk groups in December, Hong Kong would be prepared if the second wave started earlier in January. Health officials added that if the wave struck even earlier, they would have to rely more heavily on personal hygiene and social distancing measures such as school closures.

¶ 17. (SBU) When asked about the Hong Kong health officials' trip to a mainland Chinese vaccine manufacturer in mid-September, Dr. Lam stated that although the Hong Kong delegation was "suspicious" at first, the single facility that they were shown was advanced and open to sharing information about its manufacturing and testing processes. He added that even if Hong Kong wanted the mainland vaccine, they would not be able to obtain it given the overwhelming demand for the vaccine in mainland China.

MARUT